

Corton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124727
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380966
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2012
Lead inspector	Rob McKeown

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Key
Headteacher	Victoria Cunnane
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2008
School address	The Street Corton Lowestoft NR32 5HW
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Rob McKeown

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent time observing teaching, which included visiting seven lessons taught by three teachers, and observing group activities taught by teaching assistants. The inspector heard some pupils read from Years 1 and 2, and held meetings with pupils and staff, the headteacher and members of the governing body. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, monitoring reports, attainment and progress data, teachers' planning and pupils' work. He observed pupils' behaviour and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures. The inspector also analysed 55 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, 88 from pupils and 14 from staff.

Information about the school

Corton is a primary school that is smaller than average. It has increased in size since its last inspection as pupils now remain in the school until the end of Year 6. As this is the first year the school has had Year 6 pupils, the school has not yet been able to demonstrate whether it meets the current floor standards, which are minimum levels set by the government for pupils' attainment and progress. Improvements have been made to the school buildings to accommodate the rise in numbers. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to the national average. The school provides additional after-school care, the Corton Kidz Club, for up to 16 children. The gold award for an outstanding travel plan was achieved in 2010 and 2011. At the time of the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were not in school as they were attending a three-day residential visit. The current headteacher is retiring at the end of this academic year.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school, which provides a very positive climate for learning that caters well for pupils’ all-round personal development. It is an important part of the local community and almost all parents and carers would recommend it. It is not outstanding because of weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation, including by the governing body, and an inconsistent approach to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters represent in words).
- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2. By the time they leave in Year 6, almost all pupils reach or exceed the expected levels of attainment in English and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similarly good progress.
- Most of the teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Pupils enjoy their learning because teachers provide them with well-planned and stimulating activities. The strong contribution made by support staff helps pupils to learn effectively in all classes. The school makes very good use of the staff’s specialist teaching skills, for example in science and French. Learning is linked well across subjects in thematic topics.
- Pupils’ behaviour and safety are good. Attitudes to learning are typically good and often outstanding. Teachers’ high expectations for good behaviour and the care and guidance provided for pupils are particularly strong. Attendance has improved this year and is now above average.
- Leadership and management are good. Teamwork is excellent and all staff contribute towards improvement. Perceptive recruitment, performance management and staff professional development are used effectively to help improve teaching and raise standards. Procedures for safeguarding are robust and meet requirements. The tracking of progress and the formal systems of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning are inconsistent and require updating.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Establish a consistent approach to teaching phonics by organising a systematic programme for classes and groups of pupils across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Strengthen the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance by:
 - introducing a consistent whole-school system for tracking progress that enables staff to collect and analyse pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics from entry in Reception through to Year 6
 - updating the school's self-evaluation processes and strengthening the link with improvement planning
 - establishing an effective system of monitoring by the governing body that provides a sharper focus on evaluating the school's performance and offers more challenge for improvement.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is good. Parents and carers rightly believe that their children make good progress. Children's individual skills and aptitudes vary when they start school, being at or below what might be expected, although this varies from year to year and often shows a wide range of ability across a single year group. Most children meet the expected level of development by the time they leave Reception. Outcomes in communication, language and literacy have improved in the last three years but are typically not as strong as the other areas of learning. Consequently, a positive emphasis has been placed on developing children's speaking and listening skills. The detailed assessment records kept by staff show that children in the Reception class this year have made good progress in all the areas of learning. Progress continues to be good in Key Stage 1. Evidence from teachers' assessments and in lessons shows that pupils in Year 2 make good progress. All pupils have attained the age-expected level in reading, writing and mathematics and about half have exceeded it.

The assessment data collected by the school indicate that pupils in Year 6 have made good progress. The work in pupils' books and teachers' assessments show almost all have reached the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics and a minority have attained a higher Level 5. The effective learning seen in the lessons in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 illustrates the successful emphasis placed on pupils acquiring key mathematical and literacy skills. There are few gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils within the school; all make good progress from their starting points. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable benefit from good teaching and excellent pastoral support. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the clear identification of their needs and the good quality support they receive, which is targeted on these specific requirements.

Pupils make good progress in reading and their overall attainment at the ends of

Year 2 and Year 6 is above average. Children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn phonics (the sounds that letters represent), although this is not organised systematically across the three year groups. A scrutiny of teachers' assessments and listening to pupils read revealed a few gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge. Pupils spoken to in Year 4 confirmed their enjoyment of reading; they were able to discuss the different authors and types of reading material they prefer.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good and all parents and carers who sent in questionnaires believe that their children are taught well. The monitoring of the quality of teaching completed by the school in the last two years matches this judgement. There were many strengths seen in the teaching during the inspection. Positive relationships between adults and pupils, and a high level of pastoral care, are present in all classes. In the lessons observed in Classes 2 and 3, teachers ensured pupils knew exactly how to make their learning successful. Good use was also made of first-hand experiences. For example, pupils wrote about the sculptures they had made on their trip to the beach and produced graphs from the data collected on invertebrates, discovered on a visit to the local marshes. Behaviour management in these classes is excellent and this ensures learning is purposeful and pupils are fully engaged at all times. Pupils have many opportunities to work cooperatively and talk together about their learning. Teaching also provides pupils with tasks that link their learning across subjects. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have used their literacy, numeracy, science and information, communication and technology skills well in a health and fitness investigation.

A well-organised programme of individual support for reading, particularly for lower attaining pupils, helps to boost pupils' confidence and improve their reading skills. Guided reading sessions organised in Key Stage 2 have been successful in strengthening pupils' comprehension and more advanced reading skills. The school's highly effective team of teaching assistants are deployed well to work with individuals and groups. This ensures that all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are involved and are able to make good progress.

Teachers assess pupils' understanding in lessons by monitoring their progress, by highlighting errors and misconceptions, and through pertinent questioning. Pupils' work is marked regularly and targets for improvement are identified. While the school has a system for tracking pupils' progress, it is not continuous, accessible to all staff, or sufficiently useful in identifying rates of progress for groups and individuals. Children in Reception are given a good start in their first year at school. Adult led sessions focus well on children acquiring early literacy and numeracy skills and there are many opportunities for children to learn outdoors.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils get on very well together. They enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. They work hard in lessons, cooperate well when completing tasks and respond positively to the questions asked by their teachers. Behaviour is typically good and for some pupils it is outstanding. All parents and carers rightly believe that

the standards of behaviour are good and that their children are safe. Positive adult role models help children develop good personal and social skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Year 4 pupils spoken to during the inspection were polite, respectful and enthusiastic about their learning at school. They believe their school is a safe place in which to learn. They know about some of the different types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying, which they say do not happen in their school. The systems for ensuring pupils' safety are robust. For example, when classes make visits to take their learning away from the school, all pupils wear high visibility jackets. Two pupils given the responsibility for helping to coordinate the school's termly walk-to-school week were awarded the silver medal as junior road safety officers.

Assemblies and lessons in personal, social and health education contribute well to pupils' good understanding of personal qualities, such as perseverance and friendship. The school can point to examples of how the support provided for individual pupils with challenging behaviour has resulted in improved behaviour over time and good progress academically. No exclusions were recorded in the last year. Attendance had been broadly average since the last inspection but has improved this year to above average. There are good systems to follow-up on and monitor pupils' absence and reward higher levels of attendance.

Leadership and management

The impact of leadership and management is good. Morale is high among staff and teamwork is excellent. All the adults working in the school contribute to its overall success and this demonstrates a secure capacity for further improvement. Clear leadership from the headteacher exemplifies the strong focus on pastoral care, on promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination, and on nurturing personal development; these give pupils confidence and help them achieve well. Good quality teaching is secured through the careful selection of staff, regular observations of lessons and opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to enhance their skills through professional development. Staff work well together on planning learning activities that provide a stimulating and enriched curriculum. This contributes positively to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good improvements have been made in pupils' cultural development since the last inspection through an excellent partnership established with a primary school in France.

There are suitable systems for the identification and management of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. A strong partnership with another local school has been used well to enhance provision for individual pupils. Communication with parents and carers has strengthened recently with the setting up of a school website, although a few parents and carers think communication between home and school could be improved further. Some of the management systems and processes, such as the approach to self-evaluation, development planning and tracking pupils' progress, are not entirely coherent or effective and require updating. Currently, some responsibilities for leading improvements in the curriculum and other aspects of the school's work are covered temporarily. The governing body gives the school good support and, along with staff, ensures that all safeguarding procedures are robust and meet requirements. Less effective is the

governing body's monitoring of the school's performance and the rigour with which it challenges for improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



6 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Corton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Lowestoft NR32 5HW

Thank you for making me welcome when I inspected your school recently. Thank you also to everyone who returned questionnaires about your school. I enjoyed visiting your lessons, observing your break times, talking with you about your learning and looking at your work. This helped me decide that you attend a good school. I found that:

- you make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- teaching is good and you enjoy the interesting lessons your teachers plan for you
- you attend a very friendly school, your behaviour is good and everyone gets on well together
- all the staff care a lot about you, give you good support and want you all to be safe and do well
- the headteacher and all the staff work well together as a team to provide you with a good education.

I asked your headteacher and the governing body to improve some things, such as:

- helping the younger pupils to learn their letter sounds effectively
- looking closely at how well the school is doing and linking this to the plans they make for improvements.

You can do your bit to help by coming to school regularly, working hard and doing your best at all times.

Yours sincerely

Rob McKeown
Lead inspector

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